

Claim 20. The method according to claim 19 wherein the composition of step (a) further comprises a second component that provides a detectable signal in response to the interaction of said polypeptide with said compound, and wherein step (b) is achieved by detecting the level of the signal generated in step (a).

REMARKS

Rejection Under 35 USC 112

Claims 14 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Examiner states that claim 14 is dependent on a non-elected claim. Claims 14 and 15 have now been canceled, and presented as claims 19 and 20 to incorporate the scope and limitations of the non-elected independent claims.

Claims 14 and 15 have been rendered vague and indefinite. The Examiner states that the term "interaction" is vague and indefinite. The Examiner questions what type of interaction is required.

It is respectfully submitted that the term "interact" is neither vague nor indefinite. According to Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition, "interact" is to act on one another, and is not limited to chemical reaction, direct binding, etc, so long as they act on one another. As stated in the specification on page 30, lines 19-26, one method to discover an antagonist of NS5B polypeptide is to measure the decreased production of product from a substrate. In order for a compound to have such antagonist effect, a compound must first interact with the NS5B (or truncate thereof, i.e. SEQ ID NO: 4) protein.

The Examiner states that claims 14 and 15 are vague by the use of the phrase "which inhibit or which activate the polypeptide". The Examiner questions what property or action of said polypeptide is being measured.

Attention is invited to page 15, lines 31-32, of the specification. The Applicant states that NS5B region has the property of RNA-dependent RNA polymerase. Thus it should be clear that the methods of claims 14 and 15 seek for compounds which are either antagonists (inhibit) or agonists (activate) of NS5B polymerase activity.

The Examiner suggests to add the word "said" after the second reference to the term "compound" in step (a) of claim 14. The new claim 19 incorporates the Examiner's suggestion.

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